



PATTERSON

Patterson bids farewell to Commonwealth colleagues

PRIME MINISTER P.J. Patterson has expressed confidence in the continued role of the Commonwealth of Nations as an important vehicle through which its diverse membership of 53 countries, comprising 1.8 billion people, and spanning all continents of the world could achieve global prosperity by advancing democracy, good governance, poverty alleviation and development.

Mr. Patterson made these remarks at the closing session of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Valetta, Malta on Sunday. It was a farewell statement to colleague Heads of Government with whom he has worked in the Commonwealth during his political career, including as Prime Minister since 1992.

RECOGNITION

He was recognised for his steadfast support of the Commonwealth by Secretary General Don McKinnon and conference chairman Dr. Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of Malta, who both expressed deep appreciation for Mr. Patterson's outstanding contribution.

Mr. Patterson said the Commonwealth family remains of immense value and importance to Jamaica because of its commitment

to democracy, partnership and cooperative relations, as well as addressing the challenges of development, human rights and global security.

He said Caribbean countries have benefited from their association with the Commonwealth, particularly as it relates to assistance with integration into the global economy, in the areas such as trade capacity building.

CONSIDERABLE BENEFITS

"We who belong to the Caribbean Community have benefited considerably and appreciate the Commonwealth's leading role in assisting member states in their integration into the global economy ... I also recognise with great appreciation, the leading role played by the Commonwealth on issues to small economies," Mr. Patterson said.

He said the outcome and consensus reached at the Malta CHOGM, demonstrates the continued relevance and vitality of the Commonwealth family to collectively address and overcome the current development challenges and create new avenues for

advancing the global partnership for development.

A statement was issued by the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malta, which called for an urgent conclusion to the Doha Development Round and issued instructions for delegations to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong to place priority on a genuinely development-oriented round for the collective good of all countries.

Mr. Patterson expressed appreciation to outgoing Commonwealth Chairman, President Olesugun Obasanjo of Nigeria for the rewarding and cordial relationship the two countries have enjoyed as members of the Commonwealth family and the United Nations, in particular the G-77 and China. He also extended Jamaica's deepest appreciation to Secretary General McKinnon for the kind assistance received from the Commonwealth, especially in the area of technical cooperation.

"I hope I have not only occupied the crease but have been able to make some contribution to the scoreboard," Mr. Patterson concluded with a cricketing analogy, a sport that is common throughout the Commonwealth.